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Mr. Nixon's Highway

(From Chicago)

By any fair judgment Mr. Nixon's acceptance speech was a tour de force. As a fantastically competent political effort it had everything—emotion, pathos, humility, strength, determination, confidence and religious appeal.

The Republican presidential nominee described himself as a man of the future steeped in the ideals of the American Revolution. He wrapped himself in the togas of Jefferson, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson as well as those of de Gaulle, Macmillan and Adenauer. He cast himself as a leader of experience who knows personally the problems from Djakarta to Caracas, from handling Khrushchev to coping with nationalism in Africa. Clearly the young Mr. Kennedy, as Mr. Nixon managed to depict his opponent, is up against a competitor of awesome dexterity and resourcefulness.

To invade the Kennedy "New Frontier," Mr. Nixon constructed a broad highway to the future. Accusing the Democrats of "a symphony of political cynicism," he assured his listeners that, whatever the consequences, the Republicans would not outpromise their opponents. He then painted a picture—uncynical, of course—in which all Americans would have a nobler, richer life, protected against the ills of age, with educational opportunities for all, higher wages, the greatest progress in human rights since Lincoln, a fair share for farmers, the benefits of science and resource development and spiritual revitalization.

If there is a bit of contradiction and exaggeration in all of this, Mr. Nixon nevertheless stayed not merely on a high road, but on an elevated freeway. There was no direct reference to the unkind personal jabs that Senator Kennedy had rather unwisely initiated; rather he repaid the Democratic nominee deftly by implying that Mr. Kennedy's youth had led him into the mistake of suggesting that the President should have expressed regrets to Mr. Khrushchev over the U-2 flight.

There were touches of the old Nixon in subject matter, technique and verbal association, but little that opened him to flat rebuttal. Without ever accusing the Democrats of disloyal thoughts, he managed to compare their economic growth philosophy with one that the Communists are rejecting, and to suggest that his opponents have lost faith in America. He also contrived to imply that Mr. Kennedy is arrogant, an implication for which Mr. Kennedy has given some warrant.

In his foreign affairs discussion Mr. Nixon had many good lines. His call for a strategy of free world victory is far more positive than merely containing communism and makes a good bit of sense. His suggestion that "this country tell Mr. Khrushchev that 'his grandchildren shall live in freedom'" was a shrewd psychological stroke. Some of his proposals, such as reorganizing the departments of Government into a single economic and ideological strategic service, and more adequately helping people abroad to attain their aspirations, are amorphous in concept, but they have an appealing sound.

There was considerable plattitudinous and hyperbolic content to a speech that, in the tradition of political offerings, was far more general than specific. But Mr. Nixon exhibited effective oratorical fervor in his plea to Americans to face the rewarding choice of sacrifice, and his words showed the polish of study and personal composition, and when he asserted that the next President will face problems greater than those of Lincoln and involving the preservation of civilization he may not have exaggerated.

Altogether, the Nixon-Lodge combination has shown in its initial effort that it is fully prepared to wage an all-out political battle with Messrs. Kennedy and Johnson. *How do you like that?*

